

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-9 and 11-24 are pending. Claims 11-24 have been allowed by the Examiner. Claims 5 and 10 have previously been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. By this Amendment, Claims 1-2, 6-7, 11-12, 15-18 and 21-22 are amended herein merely to correct perceived antecedent basis and grammatical issues therein. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is presented herein.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112 1st and 2nd paragraphs

Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st and 2nd paragraphs. The Office Action asserts the application as originally filed does not appear to disclose “an endless circumferential groove, each of the bearing surfaces having said hydrodynamic pressure generating grooves and ridges bordered by said hydrodynamic pressure generating grooves, and, ***an inner diameter of said bearing body at the endless circumferential groove being greater than inner diameters at the ridges of the bearing surfaces.***” Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for at least the following reason(s).

In particular, as shown in Figure 2(a) of the application as originally filed, the bearing surface 2b portion of the bearing body 2a includes a ridge 2d that defines hydrodynamic pressure generating grooves 2c therebetween.

As shown in Figure 3 of the application as originally filed, a top or upper portion of the bearing body 2a includes a plurality of bearing surfaces 2b, while a bottom or lower portion of the bearing body 2a also includes a plurality of bearing surfaces 2b. The endless circumferential groove recited by Claims 1 and 6 is located between the

group of bearing surfaces 2b in the upper portion of the bearing body 2a and the group of bearing surfaces 2c in the lower portion of the bearing body 2a.

Figure 4 of the application as originally filed clearly shows the inner diameter portion of the bearing body 2a of the bearing surface 2b is defined by the ridges 2d.

Going back to Figure 3, the endless circumferential groove clearly has an inner diameter that is greater than an inner diameter of the ridges 2d of the bearing surface 2b.

Based on the above, Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art, upon reading the application as originally filed, would readily understand the above described feature of the invention recited by Claims 1 and 6 and would be able to manufacture same without undue experimentation.

For at least the above-provided reason(s), Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 6 are fully supported by the application as originally filed such that one of ordinary skill in the art to which the invention pertains would be enabled to make, use and/or sell the invention recited therein.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 6 are not indefinite.

Claims 2-4 depend from Claim 1 and Claims 7-9 depend from Claim 6. As such, the above-provided arguments with respect to Claims 1 and 6 also apply to Claims 2-4 and 7-9, respectively.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 5,941,646 to Mori et al. (Mori). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reason(s).

Independent Claims 1 and 6 each recite, among other features, a plurality of bearing surfaces formed on an inner periphery of the bearing body and separated from one another by an endless circumferential groove, each of the bearing surfaces having hydrodynamic pressure generating grooves and ridges bordered by the hydrodynamic pressure generating grooves, wherein ***an inner diameter of the bearing body at the endless circumferential groove is greater than inner diameters at the ridges of the bearing surfaces.***

Applicants respectfully submit that Mori fails to disclose or suggest such a feature.

As shown in Figures 1 and 4, Mori teaches a bearing A having a bearing surface 17 with a plurality of hydrodynamic pressure generating grooves 5 that are defined thereon by a ridge 6. While the different bearings A are separated from each other by a solid, lubricating composition 3 or space 14, the bearing A itself does not have a plurality of bearing surfaces 17 that are separated from each other by an endless circumferential groove having an inner diameter that is greater than the inner diameter of the ridge 6 of the bearing surface 17. Put simply, Applicants respectfully submit that Mori fails to disclose or suggest the feature of an endless circumferential groove separating a plurality of bearing surfaces 17 wherein the groove has an inner diameter that is greater than an inner diameter of the ridge 6.

To qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102, each and every feature recited by the rejected claims must be disclosed or taught by the reference. As discussed above, Mori fails to teach each and every feature recited by independent Claims 1 and 6. Therefore, Mori does not anticipate or render obvious that which is recited by Claims 1 and 6. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that Claims 1 and 6 be deemed allowable for at least the reasons discussed above.

Claims 2-4 depend from Claim 1 and Claims 7-9 depend from Claim 6. It is respectfully requested that these dependent claims be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons Claims 1 and 6 are allowable as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, allowance of Claims 1-4, 6-9 and 11-24, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 100725-09009.**

Respectfully submitted,
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